



SACHI A. HAMAI  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

## County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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February 23, 2015

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai *by Jim Jones*  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

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### **REPORT BACK - TEXT-TO-911 (ITEM NO. 9, AGENDA OF OCTOBER 21, 2014)**

On October 21, 2014, the Board requested that the Chief Executive Office (CEO) work with all appropriate County departments to explore the viability of establishing a Next Generation 911 emergency communication system throughout Los Angeles County. To thoroughly address this motion, the CEO collaborated with the Fire Department (Fire), Sheriff's Department (Sheriff), Internal Services Department (ISD), and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to provide the written assessment.

#### Background

The availability of Text-to-911 improves 911 accessibility for individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing and individuals who have speech disabilities. Text-to-911 would also be an alternative to voice calls to 911 in certain circumstances where speaking aloud might expose and endanger the caller, such as domestic violence, burglary, or certain terrorism situations. It has also been established that wireless text and/or data services may also operate in locations where radio coverage is too weak to support a voice call to 911, such as rural areas.

In December 2012, the four largest wireless carriers (AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon), the National Emergency Number Association, and the Association for Public-Safety Communication Officials agreed to provide a nationwide, interim short-message-service solution for Text-to-911 by May 15, 2014.

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While the four largest carriers have met the May 15, 2014, deadline to accept text messages sent to 911, the challenge statewide is to create and provide a technological infrastructure that can support and accommodate the myriad of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) required to accept the text messages.

#### Text-to-911 in Los Angeles County

On November 17, 2014, the CEO, Sheriff, Fire, ISD, and OEM met to discuss the feasibility of implementing a Text-to-911 emergency communication response system in the Los Angeles County region. We were pleased to announce that Sheriff and Fire have been engaged with the State on the implementation of a Text-to-911 system.

Los Angeles County is served by almost 90 different PSAP, with hundreds of cell phone towers requiring a comprehensive implementation plan to properly route Text-to-911 calls correctly and quickly. Service boundaries are not clear cut when it comes to the routing of cell phone calls today, due to the complexity of overlapping coverage.

Actual countywide implementation is contingent on decisions by local public safety agencies, as well as decisions by the State on the best methodology to process the calls received. The State is currently testing two different methods and discussions continue on how best to implement these approaches.

Locally, Sheriff and Fire are in the process of procuring a new 911 phone system to accommodate the receiving of any Text-to-911 and Next Generation 911 messages. The Departments are awaiting a "rollout" decision Countywide by all primary and secondary PSAP. This will include all Los Angeles Sheriff and Fire 911 Stations, as well as all contract cities where County public safety services are provided.

The implementation of the Text-to-911 and Next Generation 911 systems will take approximately two years to complete with funding provided by the State 911 program. The project will begin in the first quarter of 2015 with project management to be overseen by Sheriff, Fire, and AT&T. The State is also moving forward to incorporating the Text-to-911 and Next Generation 911 systems with the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System Authority (LA-RICS) to take advantage of LA-RICS' LTE Broadband system once it is completed.

Once the Text-to-911 system has been implemented, the residents of Los Angeles County will have a smoother and safer transition for emergency text messages regardless of the geographical location. In the meantime, the CEO will recommend to

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the Sheriff and Fire that periodic updates are provided to the Board detailing the implementation efforts of the Text-to-911 system.

Should you have any questions regarding the information provided, please have your staff contact Sheila Williams, Public Safety, at (213) 974-1155.

SAH:SW:DC:llm

c: Acting Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Sheriff  
Fire  
Internal Services

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